



STDs

AMONG

AMERICAN INDIANS & ALASKA NATIVES



April is National STD Awareness Month, an observance created to improve community awareness about Sexually Transmitted Diseases (STDs). This is particularly important among our Northwest Tribes. American Indians and Alaska Natives are disproportionately impacted by high rates of STDs. In 2004, American Indians were nearly five times more likely than whites to have chlamydia, four times more likely to have gonorrhea, and twice as likely to have syphilis.

April is National STD Awareness Month!

Sexually Transmitted Diseases are taking a devastating and disproportionate toll on **American Indians and Alaska Natives**. These numbers will continue to grow unless each of us learns how to protect ourselves.

Know the Facts

Educate,
Motivate, and
Mobilize against
STDs and HIV/AIDS!

Did you know?

- **One half** of Americans will contract an STD by the time they reach adulthood.
- **One in four** new STD infections occur among teenagers - and Native youth are at even higher risk.
- Within the NW Tribes, chlamydia and gonorrhea rates are **highest** among those age 15-29.
- There are approximately **15 million** new STD cases each year.
- AIDS rates have steadily increased in recent years, becoming the **ninth leading killer** of Native people between the ages of 15 and 44.
- The number of American Indians and Alaska Natives diagnosed with AIDS has grown more rapidly than in any other ethnic group, **increasing almost 800%** from 1990 to 1999.
- At least **15% of infertility** among women in the U.S. is the result of an untreated STD.
- An estimated **65 million** Americans are currently living with an incurable STD.





Sexually Transmitted Diseases

Sexually Transmitted Diseases (STDs) can be spread by being sexually intimate with another person who is infected. You do not need to have sex to become infected. Some STDs can be passed by skin-to-skin contact or through sexual fluids, in addition to oral, vaginal, or anal sex.

Many people who have an STD don't know it. Many infections do not cause any noticeable signs or symptoms. The only way to know for sure if you are infected is to get tested.

Depending on the type of infection, STDs are diagnosed using samples of urine, blood, saliva, or a genital swab. It is important to get tested, because many STDs can be treated or cured.

Common STDs

- **Chlamydia** - Caused by a bacteria. Infections can be cured with antibiotics.
- **Genital Herpes (HSV-2)** - Caused by a virus. Infections can be treated but not cured.
- **Genital Warts** – Caused by a virus. Infections can be treated but not cured.
- **Gonorrhea** - Caused by a bacteria. Infections can be cured with antibiotics.
- **Syphilis** - Caused by a bacteria. Infections can be cured with antibiotics.
- **Hepatitis B (HBV)** – Caused by a virus. There is a vaccine that can prevent HBV.
- **HIV and AIDs** – Caused by a virus. Infections can be treated but not cured.



Provided by Project Red Talon, a project of the Northwest Portland Area Indian Health Board

For more information, call toll free 877-955-5519 or

Visit us on the web: www.npaihb.org

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What Can You Do?

- **Abstinence (not having sex) is the best way to protect yourself from STDs and pregnancy. It is possible to get some STDs without having sex, just through skin-to-skin contact.**
- **If you have sex, choose only one partner who you know well and trust. Limiting your number of partners will reduce your risk of getting an STD.**
- **Use latex condoms for any type of sex (vaginal, oral, or anal) from start to finish.**
- **Always use water-based lubricants (like K-Y jelly) with latex condoms. Oil lubricants, like baby oil can cause latex condoms to break.**
- **Latex condoms protect the penis, vagina, mouth, or anus from many STDs, but they will not protect against genital warts (HPV) or other lesions such as herpes, if they are present.**
- **A female polyurethane condom is available and may protect these areas better, but it is not to be used with a male condom.**

To Learn More

- **Contact your tribal health department.**
- **Call the National STD Hotline at 1-800-227-8922**
- **Call the National Indian AIDS Line at 1-800-283-2437**
- **Call the CDC National AIDS Hotline at 1-800-CDC-INFO (1-800-232-4636)**
 - **Visit Project Red Talon at www.npaihb.org/std-aids/prt**
 - **Call your doctor or other healthcare provider.**